

the birds are young though, as I did not handle them, I did not see any white feathers. I first noticed them sitting on the telegraph wire beside the golf club house, and at first glance thought they were the King Crow until I noticed the tail, which had the outer feathers considerably shorter than the rest and slightly protruding.

According to the distribution of this bird given in F.B.I. it is rare in the Indian Peninsula and this part of India is not given as a likely locality. The paragraph finishes up by saying that it is probably more widely distributed, but owing to its great resemblance to the King Crow it is apt to be overlooked. This encourages me to believe that it may be the bird, and I would be very grateful if you would tell me whether you think this is possible or not.

The King Crow itself is not a common bird here in Jullundur except in the breeding season. I only saw *Surniculus* (?) a week ago; and on four consecutive days they have been in the same place, and I venture to think they have only just arrived or I would have seen them before as I spend a great deal of time watching birds.

7, NAPIER ROAD,  
JULLUNDUR,  
PUNJAB.

MRS. A. B. M. WAY.

September 5, 1940.

[The Indian Drongo Cuckoo *S. l. dicruroides* is described as being found in Upper India and Assam, extending into Northern Burma. It is obviously a rare visitor to the Punjab. Col. Rattray in a paper on the Birds of the Murree Hills, (vol. xvi, 661) describes it as a very rare species, which was shot in the Murree Hills at 5,000 ft. in 1899. Then A. J. Currie, in a note on the Cuckoos of the Punjab (vol. xxiv, p. 549), states that he heard the notes of this bird in a garden in Lahore, and identifies the call unmistakably as belonging to this species. Eds.]

#### VIII.—A NOTE ON THE ALPINE SWIFT (*MICROPUS MELBA BAKERI* HARTERT).

In a letter to me, Mr. Humayun Abdulali has pointed out that the resident race of *M. melba* is *bakeri* Hartert, and not *M. m. melba*, a point we overlooked in the joint paper by Mr. A. R. Hughes and myself, *On the road to Gersoppa and back* (Journ. B.N.H.S. vol. xli, p. 446).

With regard to the breeding of this bird, we were merely quoting from the *Fauna* [F.B.I. (Birds) 2nd Ed. vol. iv, p. 325]. If the birds breed 'during June and perhaps the last week of May,' then it was quite reasonable to expect the swifts there in numbers, but this was not the case at the time of our visit in June 1938. Mr. Ali's record in the *Journal* (vol. xxxviii, p. 830), 'The male,

with fairly large salivary glands had testes measuring  $18 \times 8$  mm. The female with a shelled egg in the oviduct, had the salivary glands very much more enlarged.' seems to definitely establish that this swift breeds in December at the Gersoppa Falls, and not in June as mentioned in the *Fauna*.

Commenting further on my observations Mr. Ali writes,

'But your note raises an interesting question. Where do the birds go during the rains? You found them absent in June, and I did not see them either, when I was down at Gersoppa on the 3rd August, last year (1939). A friend of mine however, was there on the 7th September and almost certainly saw the swifts. As a matter of fact, he dropped his camera lens over the ledge on the British side, he saw 'many small birds flying about in the mist'.

The birds appear to leave the falls from June to August, or, as you must have heard from the Chowkidar at the Dak Bungalow, the pigeons and swifts store large reserves of food in the crevices and thus hibernate through the monsoon'!!

As already stated in the joint article Mr. Hughes and I saw no birds in June (1938), but I have seen them in thousands in October (1919). I also stated that I shot this bird in the Pulnai Hills during June and July (1921). At that time they were about those hills in fair numbers. My observations, and Mr. Ali's subsequent visit in August, seem to suggest that there is a definite migration to other parts during the full force of the monsoon, but where the thousands of birds go to is yet to be discovered.

C. McCANN.

BOMBAY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY,  
BOMBAY.

July 31, 1940.

## IX.—VULTURES 'FEEDING' AT NIGHT.

Mr. Livesey's interesting experience with vultures feeding on a carcass at night—on page 55 of your *Journal* (vol. xl—No. 4—May 1939)—has prompted me to quote the following entry from my 'shikar diary' in respect of very similar proceedings witnessed by me when shooting in the Nepal Tarai and the Maharani of Khairigarh's jungles early this month with the Maharaj Kumar of Vizianagram.

'On 6-4-40 the Maharaj Kumar and I sat up for tiger in the Nepal jungles. This was in dense tree and grass jungle where it joined the *narkul* and *ratwa* grass jungles. A pair of tigers had overnight killed one of our large-size buffalo *paddas* at cross-paths some 50 yards into the tree jungle. At the crossing was a clearance some  $30 \times 40$  yards with a few big trees and right round was dense tree and cane jungle. The kill had been dragged towards clumps of cane. We decided to sit up and so the kill was dragged back into the clearing at about 4-30 p.m. Half an